1:Gutierrez de Pineda--i E-5 (1947) 1950, SC13 Goajiro SC13

# INTRODUCTION

121 In accordance with the plan drawn up by the Instituto Etnológico Nacional de Colombia /National Institute of Ethnology of Colombia/ to present a complete monograph on some aspect of indigenous culture in each number of this review, and in order to continue the study presented in the previous issue on the Guajiro community which we visited in 1947 with the licentiates Roberto Pineda Giraldo and Milciades Chaves Ch. and Mrs. María Rose de Recasens, we here present the Organización Social en la Guajira /Social Organization in La Guajira/, a title which embraces some aspects of the manner in which the individual and his institutions function in this community.

We have wished to present not merely an interpretative study but rather a series of facts, as trustworthy as it was possible for them to be, arranged in the way we consider to be best, that is, starting with the individual as the primary cell in the social organization, from the moment of birth on through the most important stages of his life within the group, up to sickness and death, and ending with reference to law, that is, the institutions which govern life in society.

This plan, then, tends to give an objective view of the interrelations between the individual and his group and of the way in which each complement the other in making possible the communal life of the individuals as components of the family cells, the small social groups, and the total collectivity. We have therefore subdivided our work into the two essential parts mentioned above, taking the individual, that is, the average man in the community, as a basis, with his manner of living, his ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting when faced with the various problems and institutions which society has established. In brief, we have wished to present the individual as he confronts his environment. /xiv/

124 The research on which this treatise is based was carried out directly in the field, data being obtained from different

/xiv cont./

individuals as informants, both men and women, in various parts of La Guajira Peninsula, the natural habitat of the Indians to whom we refer. They have, consequently, at least a margin of sufficiently high reliability, as the check thus obtained allowed for the clarification, confirmation, and correction of all data which were taken down in the preliminary study.

We would have liked to start this monograph with a description however brief of the geographical surroundings in which the Indians of La Guajira live, but on this subject we would refer the reader to the previous number of this review in which he will find an article written by my husband, licentiate Roberto Pineda Giraldo, entitled Aspects de la Magía en la Guajira /Aspects of Magic in La Guajira/, in which there is a brief summary of the geography of the peninsula. However, in some of the chapters of this treatise certain references to the geography of the peninsula will be found, as we have considered them to be indispensable for clearing up certain social and economic phenomena which otherwise would have remained obscure, because the economy, as will be gathered from reading this present work, plays a very important part in the functioning of Guajiro institutions.

The reader, furthermore, will find certain repetitions in the different aspects treated herein, but this is also due to our desire to leave nothing ambiguous or unclear. Many of the conflicting situations faced by the individual, occurring at different times and in regard to various legal institutions, have given rise to different reactions and phenomena which we felt needed clarification, and consequently we have been obliged to repeat them on the different occasions when they have had to be considered.

It may also be observed that the chapter on marriage is the longest of all, and it is in that very chapter that most repetitions and references to past and future reported situations will be found. Marriage in La Guajira may be considered to be the basis of all social organization, for it is via marriage /xv/

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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551 told that among my own people I was a sort of medicine-man and chief combined.

Nowadays most of the Indians in Guajira acquire three first names: a Spanish one that the white men give them, a nickname, and their true, Indian name, which is secret except to members of their immediate family. When a girl is born, her father names her after her mother or some near female relative, but for everyday use she has a pet name [553] which is only dropped when she reaches marriageable age. She then acquires a new name, which she keeps for the rest of her life.

563 The Creoles called those in the border areas who were not 101 Indians '*gente*', or just 'people'. They could scarcely be called white, for many were as good as pure black, being the descendants of former slaves. When they told us in Rio Hacha that there were not any 'people' living in this or that village, they meant that there were none but Indians there. Those who were not Indians, that is those who wore trousers, also called themselves '*civilizados*', while the Indians called them arijuna.

115 We called our two old Indians Gaffer and Gammer, and the youngest 'The Lad'. We liked The Lad especially. He was •124 strong, merry and did the work of two. The fourth, who, strangely enough, had a crew cut and was supposed to be our interpreter, we called 'Bristles', and he learned to answer to that. He knew a little Spanish, but as an interpreter he was no use. When the Gaffer had been talking to us for a long time and we asked Bristles what he had said, the answer always was: 'Nothing'. Perhaps that was what the other's talk amounted to, but we should have preferred to have judged that for ourselves. We noticed, too, that if we had to scold the Gaffer, Bristles did not dare repeat what we said. With gestures and the few Guajiro words we knew we could make Gaffer realize that we were annoyed with him, but not always why.

291 The men wore nothing but the usual piece of cloth and 386 belt, the *márete*, or, in Spanish, guayuco, which really means crupper, and sandals to protect their feet from the cactus spikes lying on the ground, but the Gammer was enveloped

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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609 great indignation. In those parts to which civilization had
673 penetrated, it was not considered shameful to steal, provided you were not discovered.

Why do all semi-civilized natives, whether Indians or negroes, steal like jackdaws, while primitive peoples in the jungle respect each other's property? Stealing had become a sport with the half-bred Guajiros, but the Indian law was still enforced: he who was discovered had to replace what he had stolen and pay compensation as well.

The old man took advantage of the confusion to make off. When we had finished with his wife, he and his donkeys had gone, and his spouse had to follow on foot, swearing and cursing as hard as she could.

115 The two younger Indians did not go with the old couple.
124 They received half a bag of maize and were delighted. It should have lasted them the whole way back and more, but I am sure that they cooked it all, as soon as they could borrow a pot, eating more than they had ever done before and treating everyone else, and probably going hungry for the rest of the way home.

We had wanted to give The Lad a hat, a thing for which he longed, as he had spent the last few days trying to explain to my wife, for whom he had a great admiration and for whose help he was hoping. He had been sure that there would be hats to be had at Nazaret. But of Nazaret both he and we had had exaggerated ideas. It was a mission station, not a trading post. The monks did not sell hats, and they possessed but one apiece. The Lad had earned a hat and would have had one, had it been possible; but he had to walk away as bare of head as he came.

7:Belinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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115 685 And her eyes shone at the recollection of the now forbidden pleasures of her girlhood.

• 124 When I went on trips in the surrounding country I usually had Francisco with me and often my wife. Anita had then to be ready to feed us when we came home, whether it were the same day, or the next, or three days later. In such things Indian women have patience. They know how to wait, and they are never surprised.

124 556 We began our exploration of the brown hills and green valleys of Macuira with a long trip on foot. Laboriously we waded through the fine sand. This is almost firm when it is damp, but it was then the dry season and the sand was loose. We were going to visit relatives of Francisco, simple people, but not actually poor. To us who had already had a certain amount to do with Indians, it was a surprise to find ourselves dealing in such categories as 'rich', 'poor', 'well-to-do', etc., just as though we were concerned with white people. Among all other Indians the difference in economic status between individuals had been relatively insignificant, as, presumably, it had been among the Guajiro before they took to herding cattle.

133 The Indians we were to visit lived in a beautiful place, just on the fringe of a watered valley between purple brown heights, with the peak of Ituhor dominating the landscape. The valley was like a green Bengal fire against its parched 34a background. There were two huts, built of cactus wood and with roofs of the same material. They were saddle-backed and linked by a wall, which acted as a shield against the wind, that there always blows in the same direction. In front of this wall, that is between the two houses, were the [41] fires. Round about were shelves covered with grass and erected on four poles. The Creoles call these *trojas*. You can sit under them and be out of the sun, and cooking utensils and stores can be kept on them out of reach of animals. [36a] Here and there were hammocks stretched between poles stuck in the ground, and there were other poles used in the all but daily butchering of a goat or sheep. Round these there were dark patches on the ground.

123 351 Having Francisco with us we were naturally well re-

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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## CHAPTER 11

# The Brigands of Cusina

LIFE is a restless, not to say nerve-racking, business in Guajira. We had to be continually on our guard to a greater or lesser extent, and we never had a minute to ourselves. We were continually surrounded by Indians coming and going, wanting to sell, to buy, to exchange, to grouse, to inspect us and all that was ours. We liked the Indians, yet we had a feeling of being in danger.

We were ready to go to the Macuira Hills and get to know the rest of Guajira. We had a better caravan now, thin though the animals were. Father Crispin had helped me to buy them. Francisco Ipuana was coming with us as body-servant, if I may call him that. He was neither shrewd nor bold, but at least he was reliable and loyal. The monks had told him to serve us well, and that was enough for him. On his recommendation we engaged another young Indian who spoke not a word of Spanish and whom we called José. We had learned a little Guajiro and, besides, we had Francisco to interpret. We started off with two other Indians as well, but they were to come only as far as Castilletes on the coast to the south. From there we intended to travel along the coast, make an excursion into Venezuela, and then cross the peninsula from south to north and so return to Rio Hacha, from which we had started.

We were quite melancholy at saying good-bye to the friendly monks and nuns, and Father Salvador gave us his blessing, heretics though we were. We had quite a company of Indians going with us. There was a rich Indian on his way to a funeral, who had his family and household with him. Francisco whispered to me that there was nothing bad